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篠原とおる_Toru-Shinohara

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Translated by Molokidan Cleaned by Wright Typeset/Proofread by aloner

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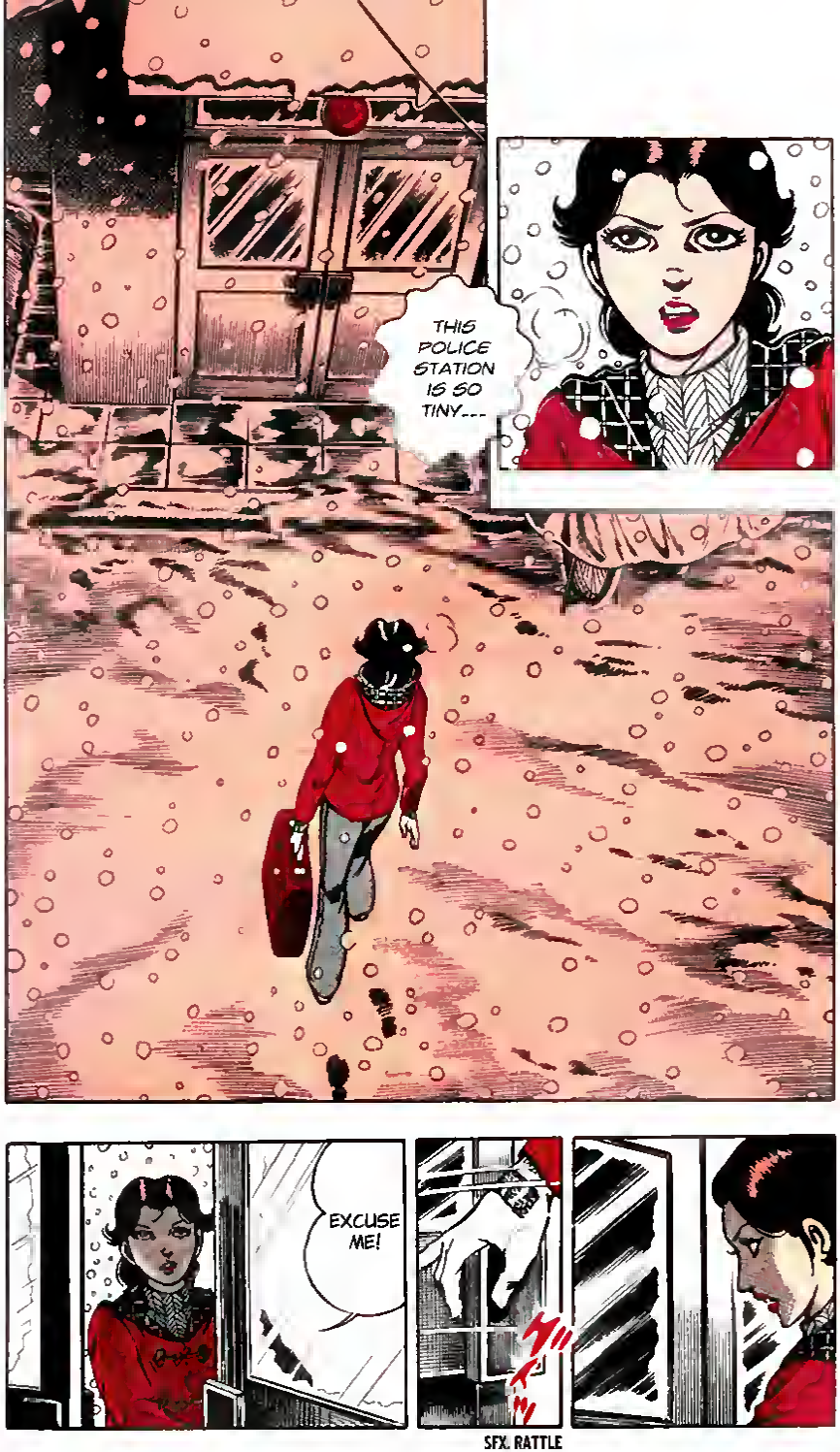
THE PAST IN A BLOODY CROSS [2]


THIS POLICE STATION IS SO TINY---
EXCUSE ME!
SFX: RATTLE

EXCUSE ME! IS ANYONE HERE?
EXCUSE ME! IS INSPECTOR HABE HERE?
UMM... I'M LOOKING FOR HARA-SAN.
YES, HOW MAY I HELP YA?
OKAY...
OH, HE WENT TO GO GATHER FIREWOOD. HE'S OUT BACK. WHY DON'T YOU GO LOOK FOR HIM?
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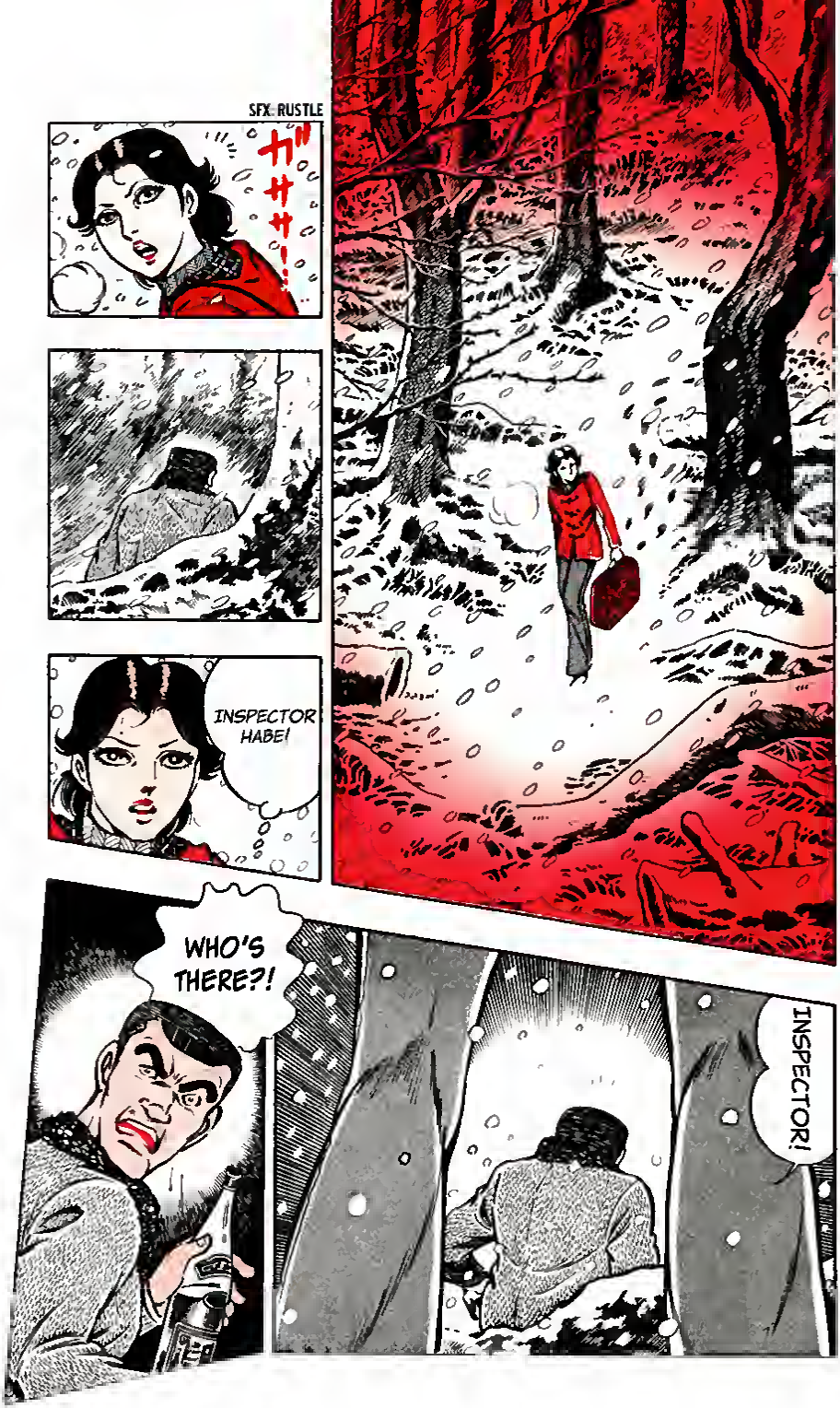
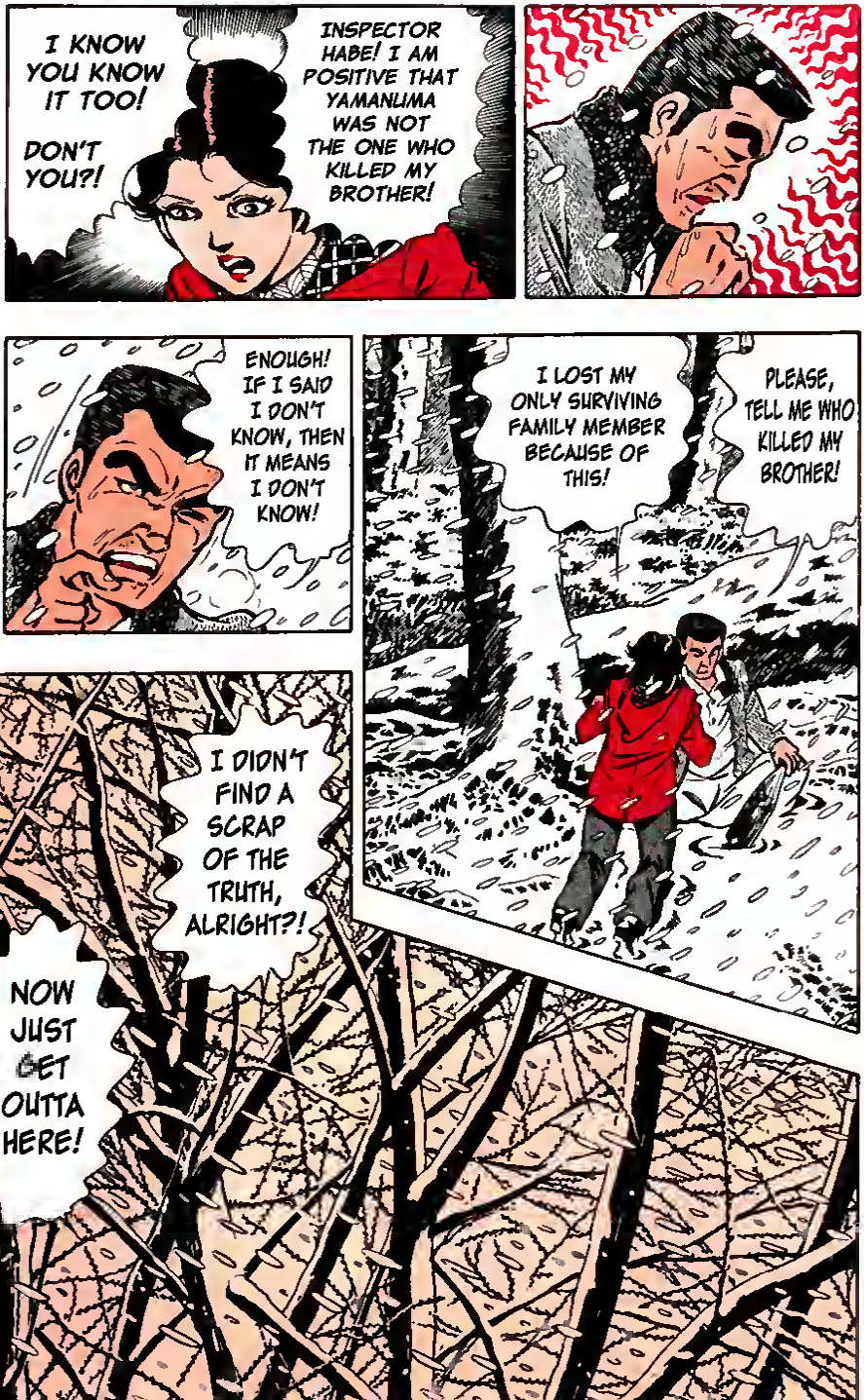
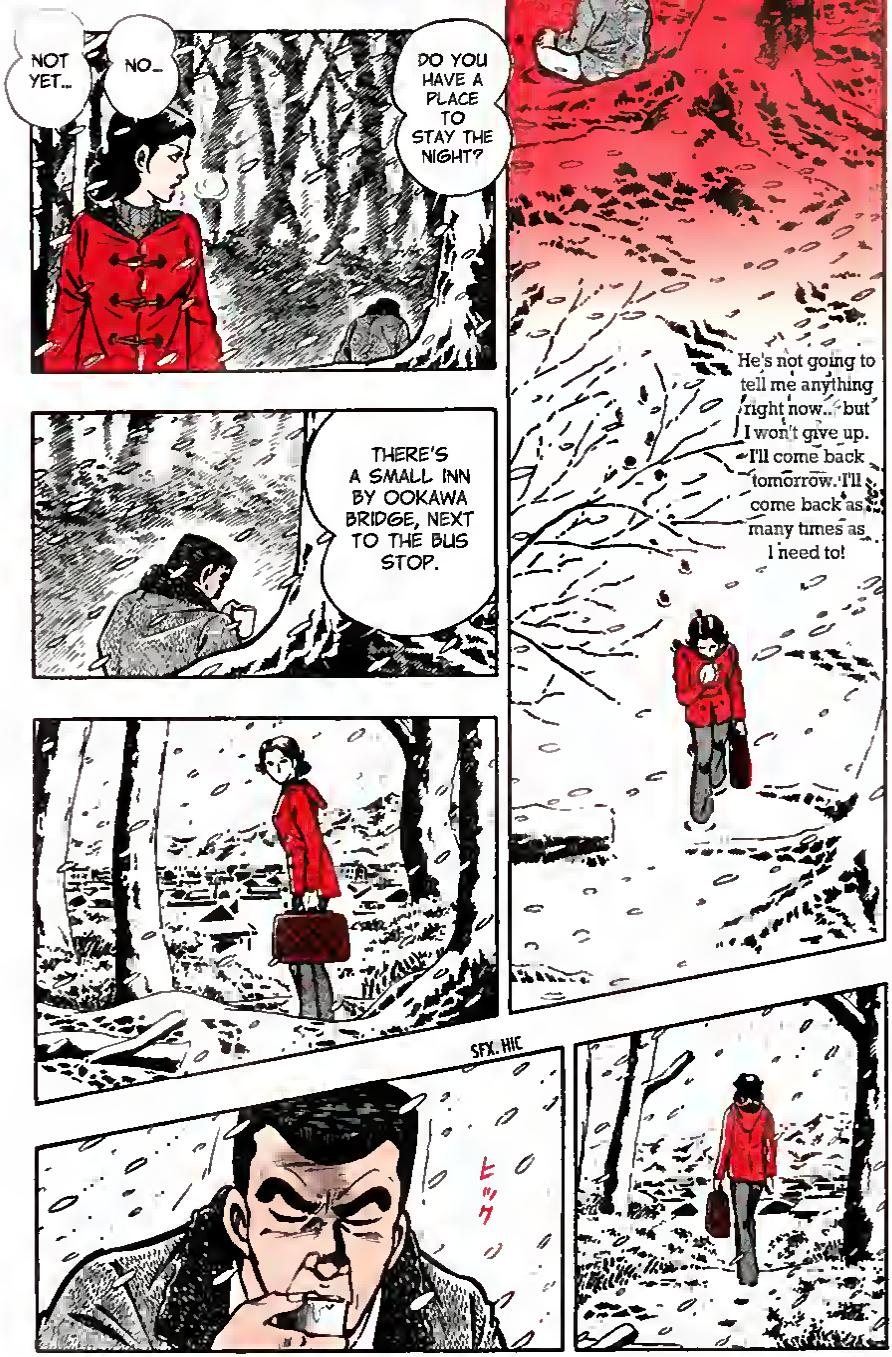
SFX: SLIDE


SFX: RUSTLE
カサカサ!!
INSPECTOR HABE!
WHO'S THERE?!
INSPECTOR!

YOU SCARED ME... WHY DID YOU COME ALL THE WAY OUT HERE?!
FOR MY BROTHER, OF COURSE...
Y-YOU...
IT'S ME. HINO MIKA...
SFX: GULP
HOO... HIC!
THE CASE HAS ALREADY BEEN SOLVED.
MY TRANSFER HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH YOUR BROTHER.
NO IT HASN'T... AND YOUR BEING SENT ALL THE WAY OUT HERE PROVES THAT!

I DON'T BELIEVE YOU! I THINK YOU FOUND OUT THE TRUTH ABOUT MY BROTHER'S KILLER IN YOUR INVESTIGATIONS!
YOU DID, DIDN'T YOU?! AND WHEN YOU TRIED TO MAKE IT PUBLIC, SOMEONE TRIED TO SHUT YOU UP!
THAT'S WHAT HAPPENED, ISN'T IT? THAT'S WHY YOU'RE OUT HERE!
SFX: HIC
AFTER REQUESTING A TRANSFER OVER AND OVER AGAIN, MY BOSS FINALLY AGREED TO SEND ME UP HERE. I'M THE ONE WHO WANTED TO COME HERE...
THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL... I JUST GOT DEPRESSED FROM WORKING ON MORBID CASES DAY AFTER DAY.
SFX: GULP...
WHY ARE YOU DRINKING SO MUCH, THEN?


I KNOW YOU KNOW IT TOO!
DON'T YOU?!
INSPECTOR HABE! I AM POSITIVE THAT YAMANUMA WAS NOT THE ONE WHO KILLED MY BROTHER!
ENOUGH! IF I SAID I DON'T KNOW, THEN IT MEANS I DON'T KNOW!
I LOST MY ONLY SURVIVING FAMILY MEMBER BECAUSE OF THIS!
PLEASE, TELL ME WHO KILLED MY BROTHER!
I DIDN'T FIND A SCRAP OF THE TRUTH, ALRIGHT?!
NOW JUST GET OUTTA HERE!


DO YOU HAVE A PLACE TO STAY THE NIGHT?
NO...
NOT YET...
He's not going to tell me anything right now... but I won't give up. I'll come back tomorrow. I'll come back as many times as I need to!
THERE'S A SMALL INN BY OOKAWA BRIDGE, NEXT TO THE BUS STOP.
SFX. HIC
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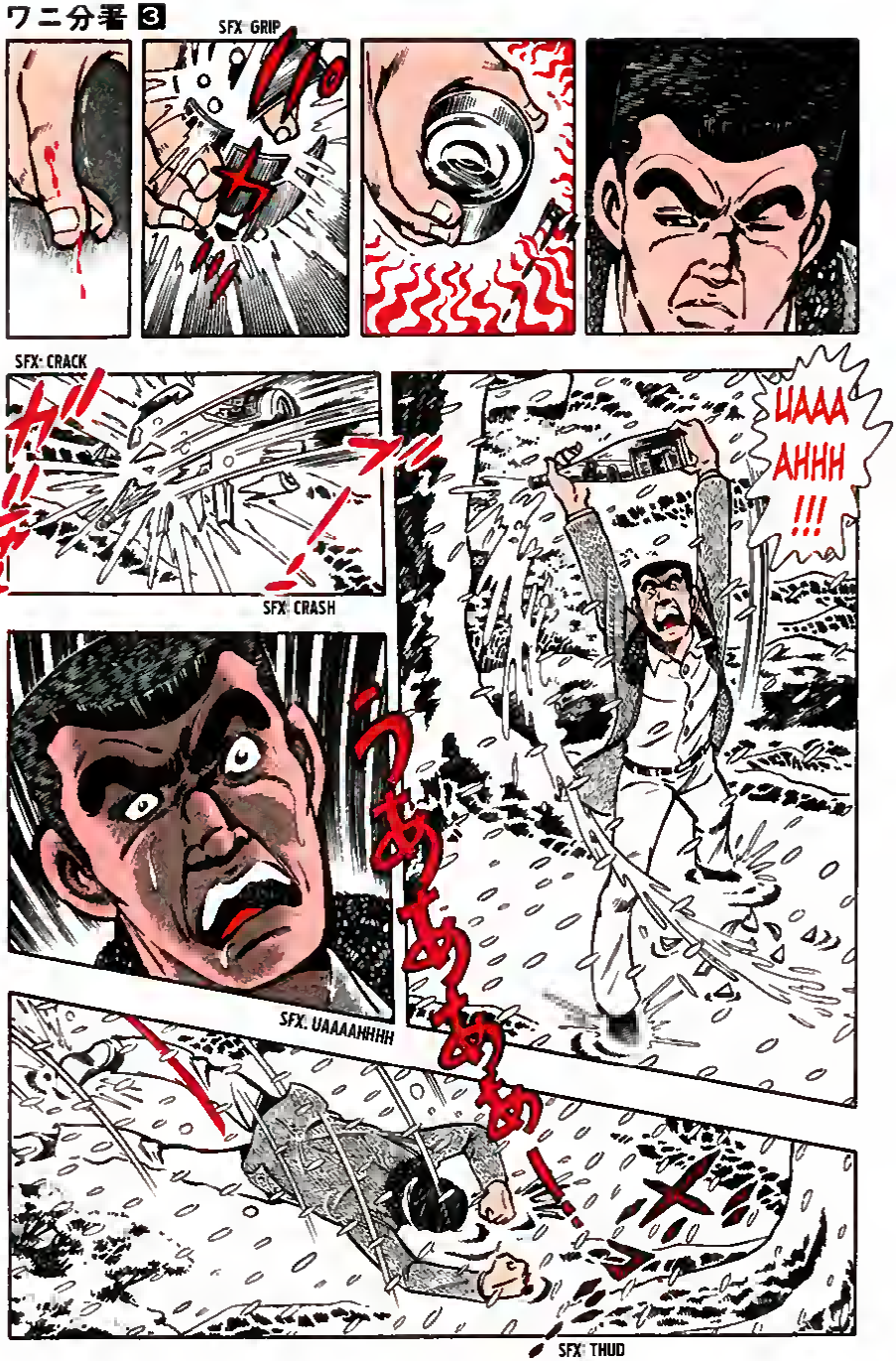
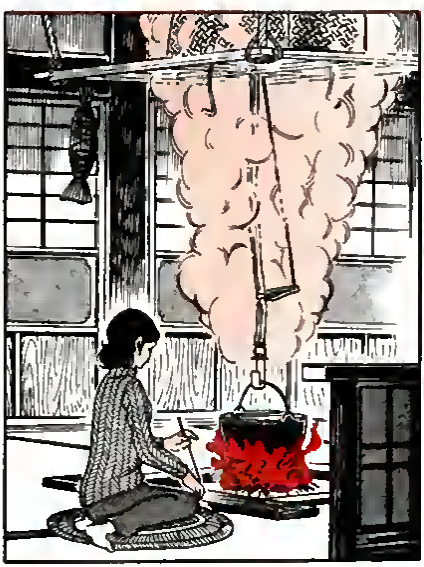
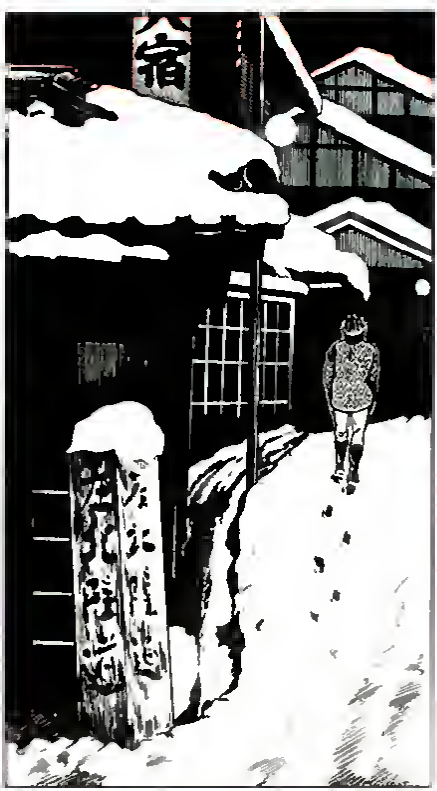

SFX: GRIP
SFX: CRACK
SFX: CRASH
UAAA AHHH !!!
うあああああ!
SFX. UAAAAHHHH
SFX: THUD





SFX: CRACKLE. .

WHAT? A PHONE CALL?
PHONE CALL FOR YOU, MISS.
SFX: TICK TOCK
HELLO? THIS IS HINO...
OKAY... THANK YOU...
IT'S RIGHT OVER THERE.
YES! WHERE ARE YOU?
Left from Ookawa bridge, there's a bar. I'll be waiting there.
There's something I want to talk to you about. Will you come out to meet me?
INS-PECTOR HARA?!
It's me. Inspector Hara!

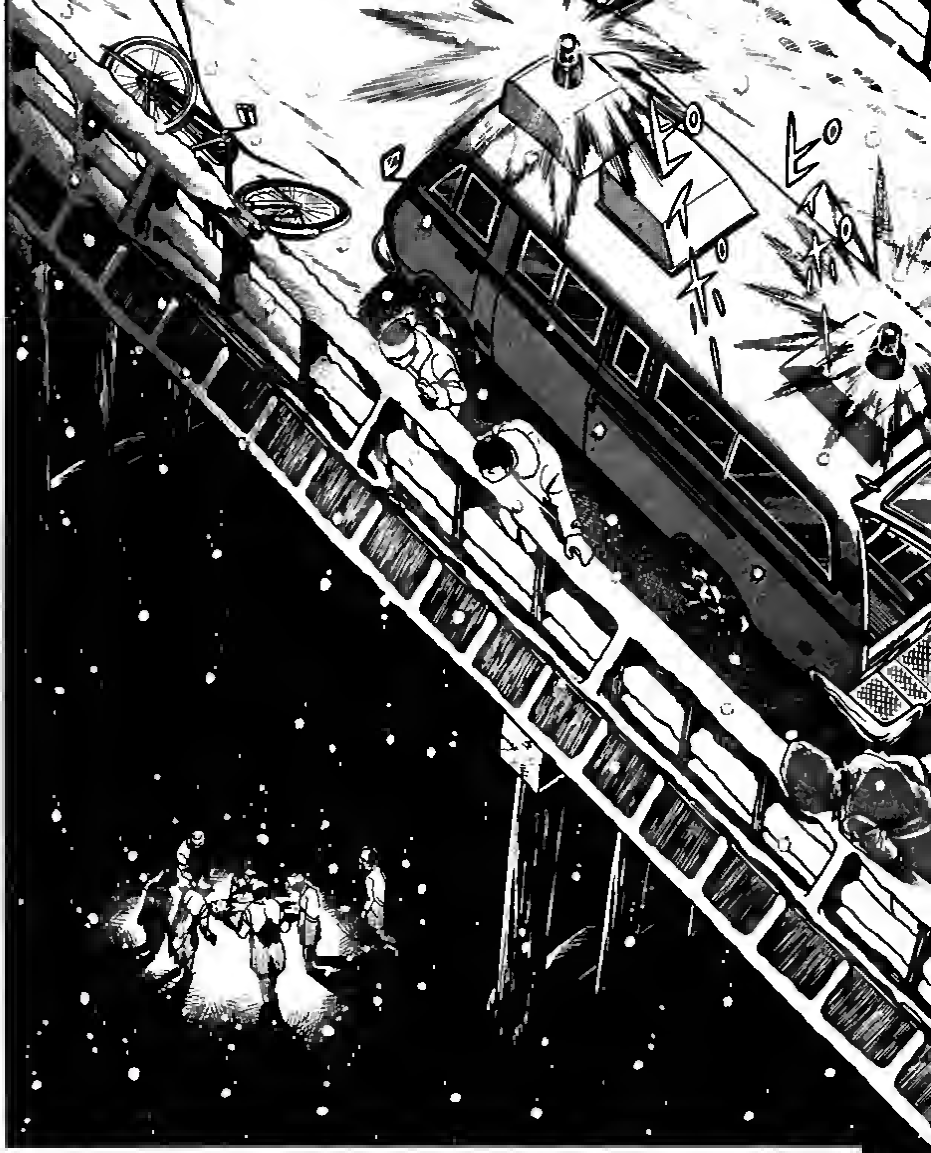
SFX: DASH
宿
SFX: CRUNCH CRUNCH

HAA,
HAA...
HAA,
HAA...
SFX: CRUNCH
SIGN: Ookawa Bridge

WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT HAPPENED ?!
I DUNNO! WE WERE JUST PASSING BY WHEN WE FOUND THIS BICYCLE!
GIVE ME THE FLASH-LIGHT!
HEY! THERE'S SOMEONE DOWN THERE!

MAYBE SOMEONE SLIPPED AND FELL OFF THE BRIDGE!
AHH! INSPECTOR HARA!
THERE IS SOMEONE DOWN THERE! GO AND CALL THE DOCTOR!
THE BRIDGE IS FROZEN, SO HE MUST HAVE SLIPPED OFF!
THAT GUY SURE LIKED HIS LIQUOR. HE MUST HAVE BEEN DRINKING!

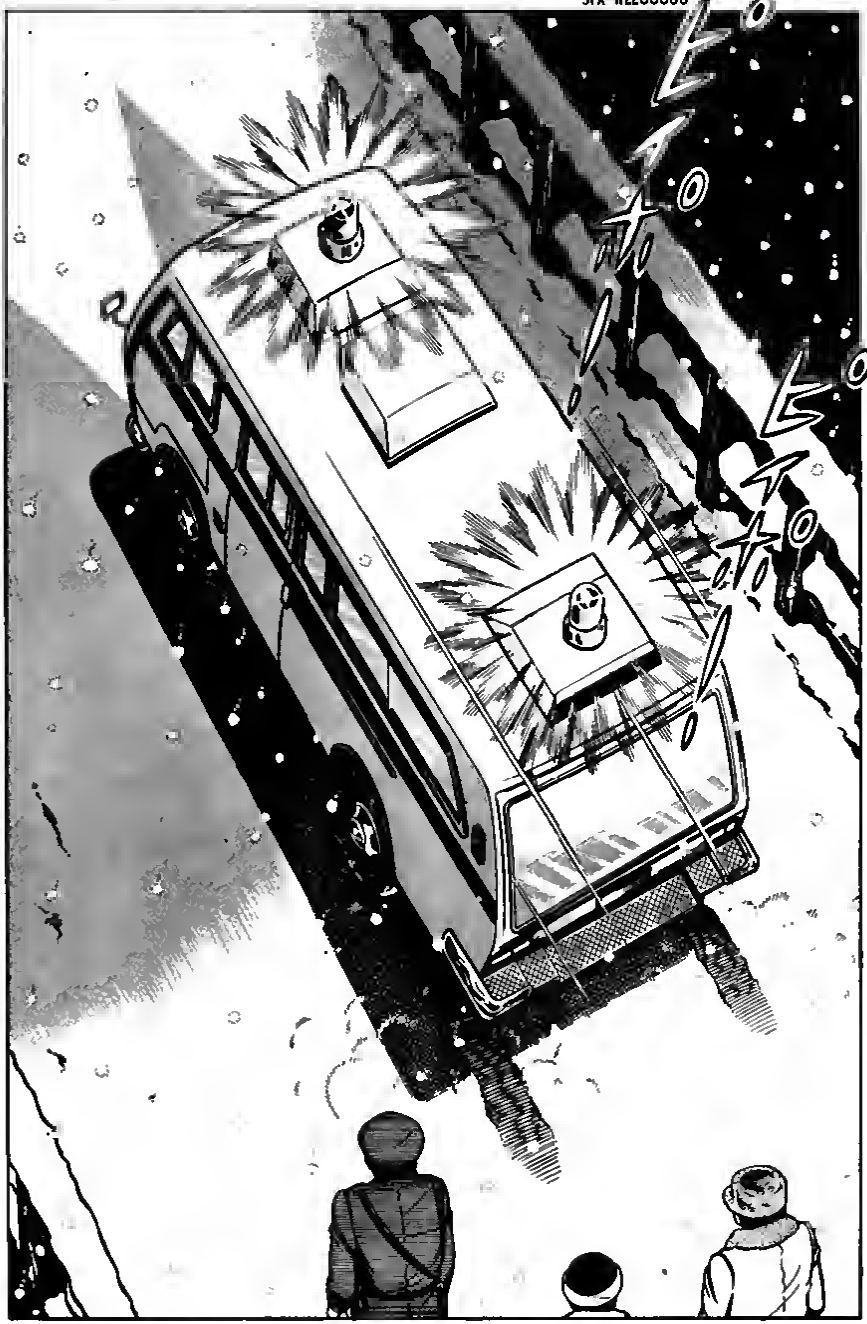
NO!!! HE CAN'T DIE YET!
WHAT?! HE'S DEAD?!
IT'S TOO LATE. HE'S A GONER.
WAKE UP! TELL ME WHO DID IT! WHO KILLED MY BROTHER?!
HE CALLED ME OUT HERE SO THAT HE COULD TELL ME THE TRUTH ABOUT THE CRIMINAL! HE CAN'T DIE YET!
AAAHHH... INSPEC-TOR!!
YOU CAN'T DIE! IF YOU DIE, THEN THE CASE REALLY WILL BE CLOSED!


SFX: WEEOOOO

NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES YOU CALL OUT TO HIM... HE WON'T BE ABLE TO HEAR YOU
IT'S TOO LATE FOR HIM NOW.

INSPEC-TOR!
HEY! BRING OVER A STRET-CHER!

HE WAS DRUNK, TOO.
HE FELL STRAIGHT ON TO A FROZEN RIVER. IT SHOULDN'T BE THAT MUCH OF A SURPRISE.
WHAT WAS HE THINKING, RIDING HIS BIKE ON THE BRIDGE
SFX: WEEEOOOO


SFX: WEEOOOOO
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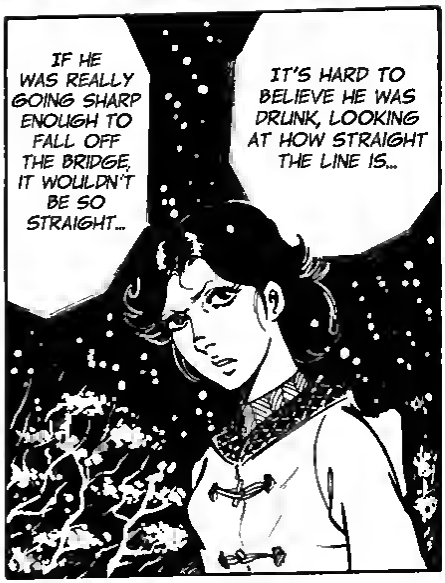
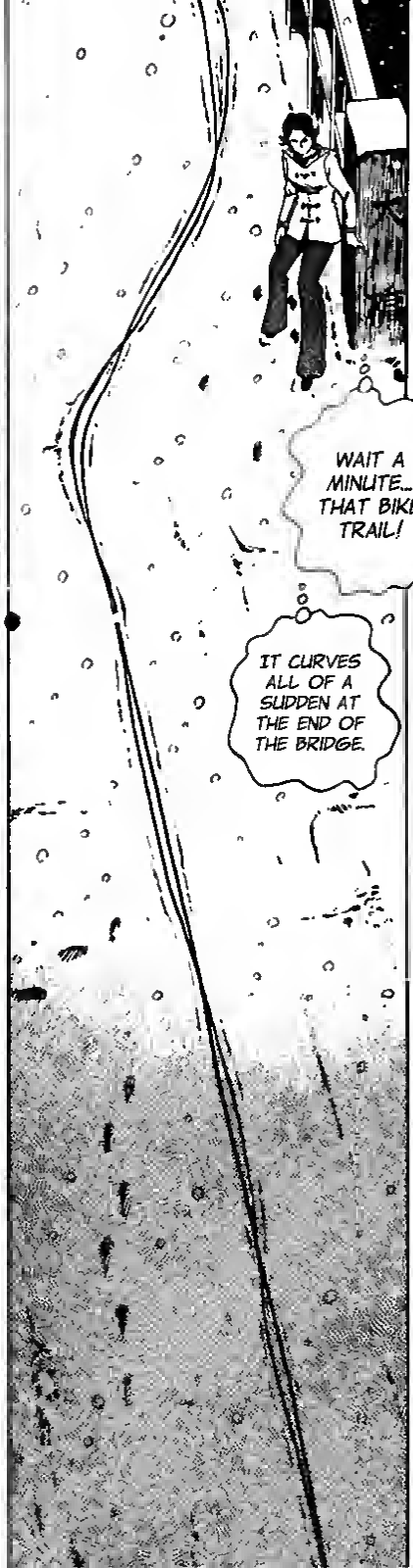
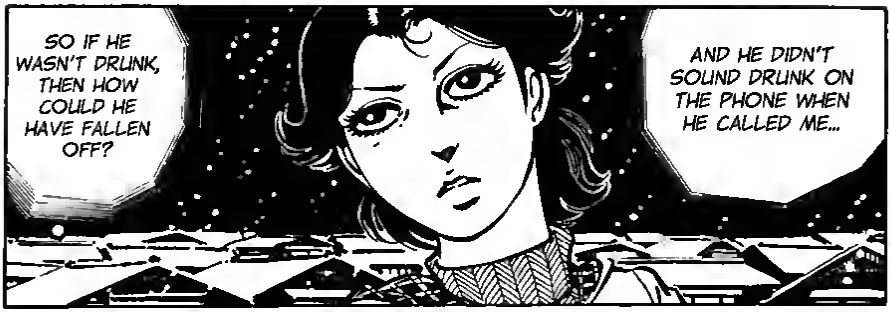
SFX. WEEEOOOO

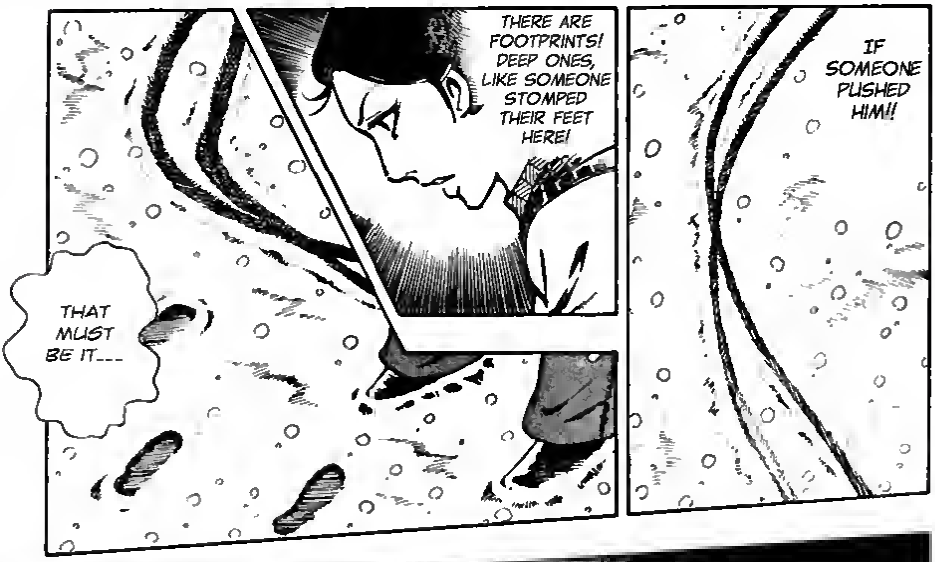
INSPECTOR HARA WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO KNEW ANYTHING ABOUT THE CASE, AND NOW HE'S GONE... I FEEL LIKE I'M CURSED OR SOMETHING...
NOW... I REALLY HAVE AB-SOLUTELY NOTHING TO GO ON...

UP UNTIL THAT POINT, IT'S PERFECTLY STRAIGHT...


IF HE WAS REALLY GOING SHARP ENOUGH TO FALL OFF THE BRIDGE, IT WOULDN'T BE SO STRAIGHT...
IT'S HARD TO BELIEVE HE WAS DRUNK, LOOKING AT HOW STRAIGHT THE LINE IS...


WAIT A MINUTE... THAT BIKE TRAIL!
IT CURVES ALL OF A SUDDEN AT THE END OF THE BRIDGE.

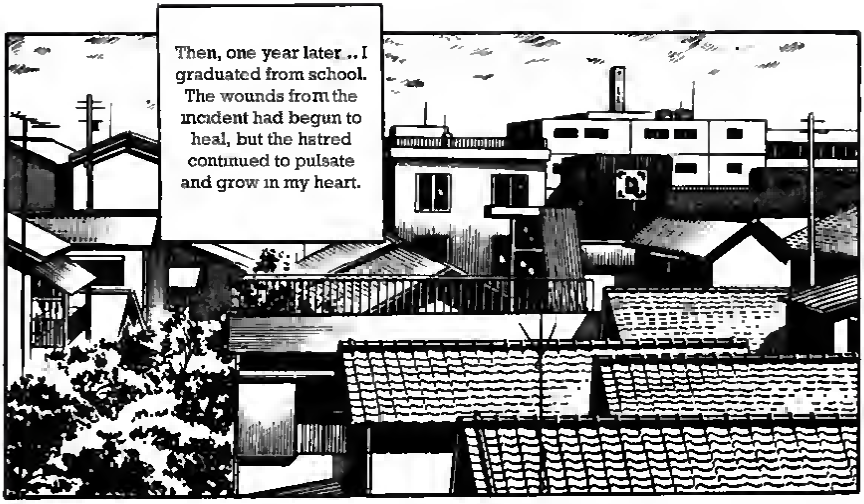

SO IF HE WASN'T DRUNK, THEN HOW COULD HE HAVE FALLEN OFF?
AND HE DIDN'T SOUND DRUNK ON THE PHONE WHEN HE CALLED ME...

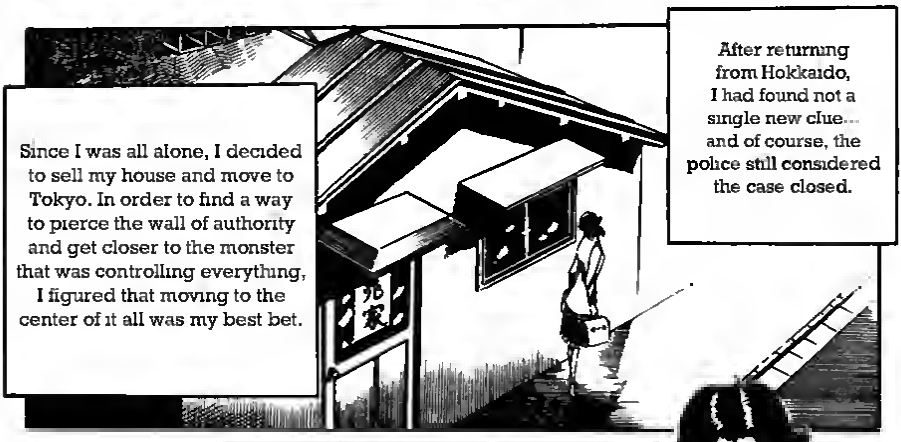

THERE ARE FOOTPRINTS! DEEP ONES, LIKE SOMEONE STOMPED THEIR FEET HERE!
THAT MUST BE IT...
IF SOMEONE PUSHED HIM!!

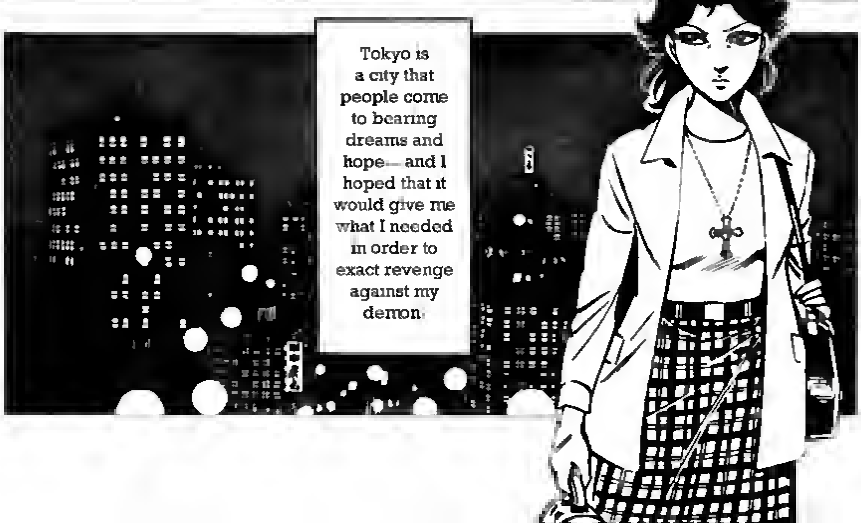
WHAT KIND OF A MONSTER IS LURKING BEHIND ALL THIS? SOMEONE WHO CAN SEND HIGH-RANKING POLICE INSPECTORS AROUND WHENEVER THEY PLEASE... SOMEONE POWERFUL ENOUGH TO COVER UP AN ENTIRE MURDER CASE...
THAT MUST BE WHAT HAPPENED... INSPECTOR HARA WAS KILLED HERE... BY SOMEONE ELSE WHO KNEW WHAT REALLY HAPPENED...

SMIRKING AS HE STARES AT ME WITH HIS COLD, CRUEL EYES...
WHOWEVER IT IS, HE MUST BE WATCHING MY EVERY MOVE!
SFX: WHOOOO
BUT NO MATTER WHO IT MAY BE...

EVEN IF IT IS A CRUEL, INHUMAN DEMON... I NEED TO FIND OUT THE TRUTH... NO MATTER HOW MANY YEARS IT TAKES. EVEN IF IT TAKES ME MY WHOLE LIFE... I'LL CHASE IT... THAT'S THE ONLY REASON I HAVE TO LIVE ANYMORE.
NO MATTER WHAT!
SFX: WHOOOO
AND WHEN I FIND THE TRUTH, I'M GOING TO HAVE MY REVENGE... NO MATTER WHAT IT TAKES...


Then, one year later... I graduated from school. The wounds from the incident had begun to heal, but the hatred continued to pulsate and grow in my heart.


Since I was all alone, I decided to sell my house and move to Tokyo. In order to find a way to pierce the wall of authority and get closer to the monster that was controlling everything, I figured that moving to the center of it all was my best bet.
After returning from Hokkaido, I had found not a single new clue... and of course, the police still considered the case closed.


Tokyo is a city that people come to bearing dreams and hope— and I hoped that it would give me what I needed in order to exact revenge against my demon.

I tried every job I could, as long as I felt I was capable of doing the task . this allowed me to meet as many people as possible and widen my information network.

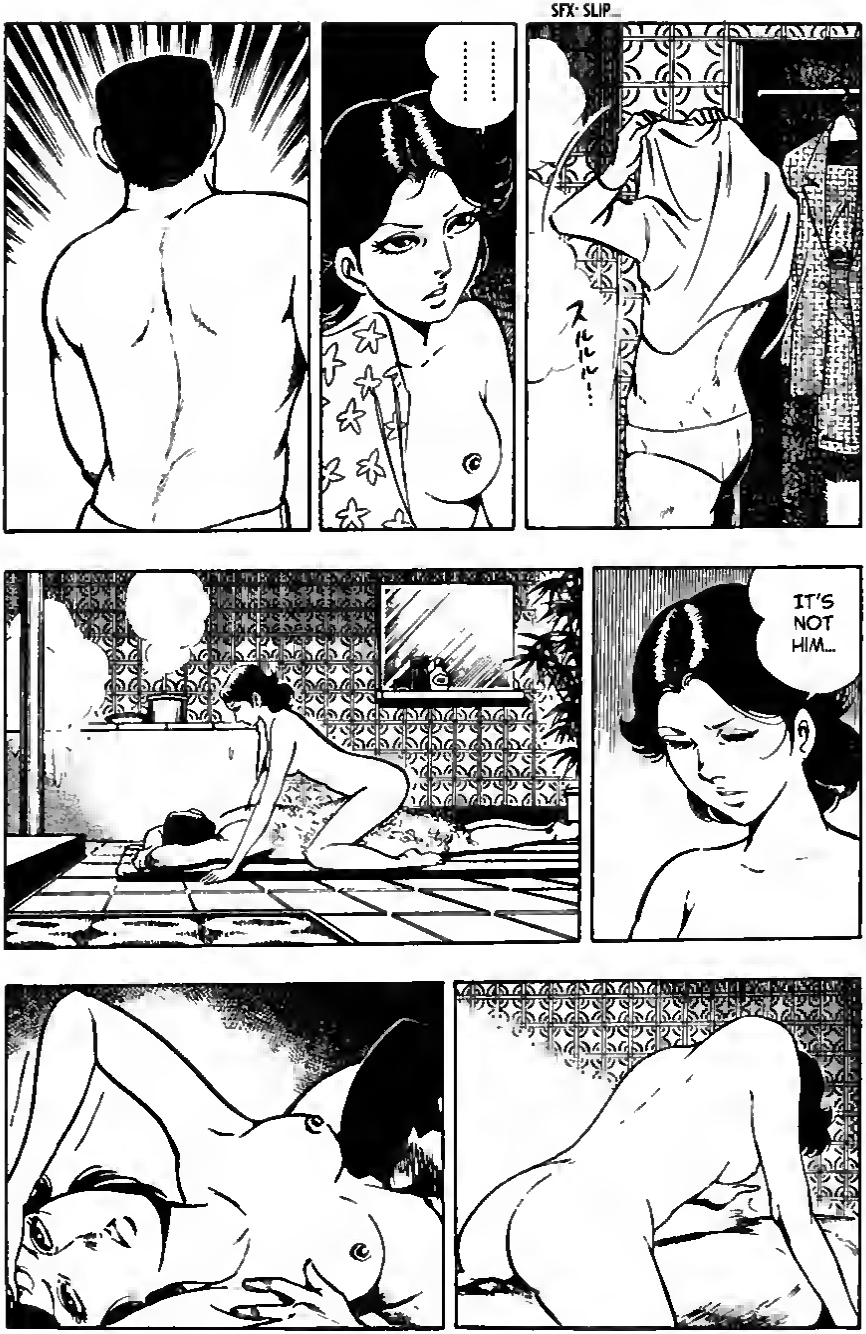
YOU'RE REALLY A WEIRD GIRL, YOU KNOW THAT?

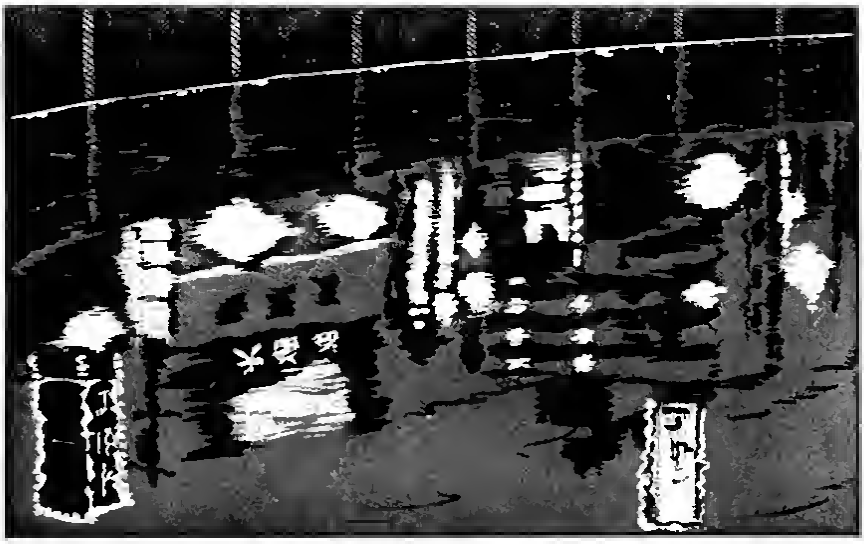
Information... the killer's height, weight, facial features, and age... and the two wounds on his back...

THAT'S RIGHT.
ALL YOU EVER DO IS ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT THAT MAN. YOU MUST REALLY LOVE HIM...

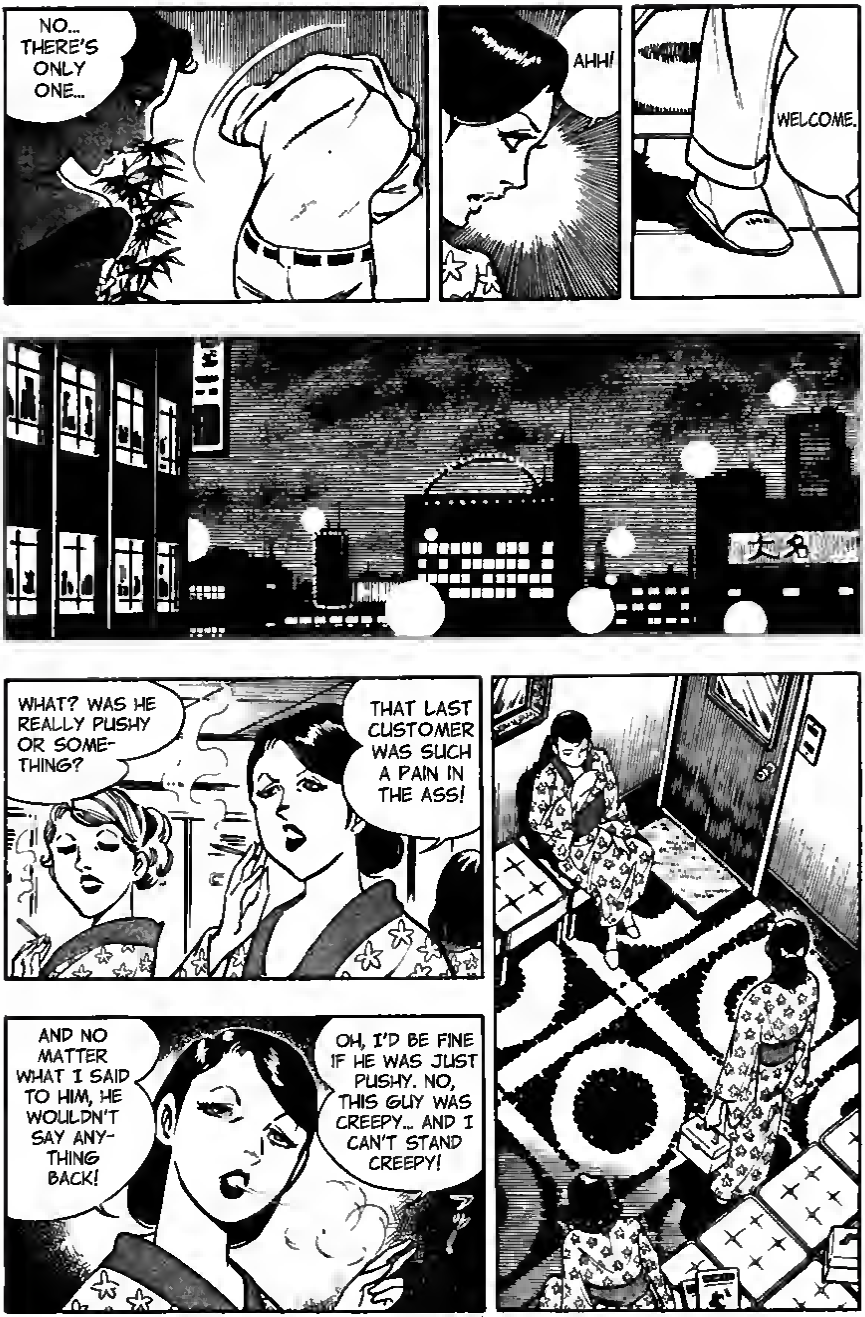
YOU GET TO SEE DOZENS OF MEN'S BACKS EVERY DAY, AND YOU'LL BE ABLE TO ASK THEM ALL YOU WANT!
IF YOU WANT TO SEE MEN'S BACKS THAT BADLY, THEN YOU SHOULD TRY WORKING AT A SOAP CLUB!
A SOAP CLUB?!
EVEN DOWN TO THE SCARS ON HIS BACK... I'D LIKE TO GET A GANDER AT THE LUCKY GUY!
YOU SAID IT!
A SOAP CLUB...
BLACK, YELLOW, RED... THEY COME IN MANY DIFFERENT COLORS, YOU KNOW. KYAHAHAHA...
KYAHAHAHA... IN EXCHANGE FOR SEEING THEIR BACKS, THOUGH, THEY MAKE YOU SPEND A LOT OF TIME LOOKING AT OTHER THINGS... HAHAHAHA!
AND SO, THAT NIGHT, I STARTED WORKING AT A SOAP CLUB.
ニューメルヘン
本家 大和屋敷
ドルコ
高級ソープ 千姫
ソープ パンプー

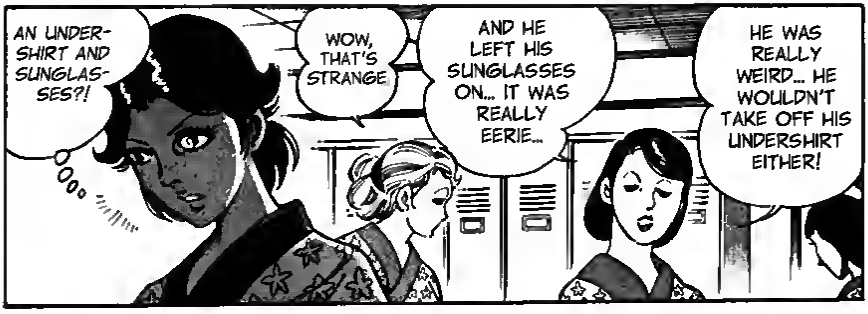
WELCOME.

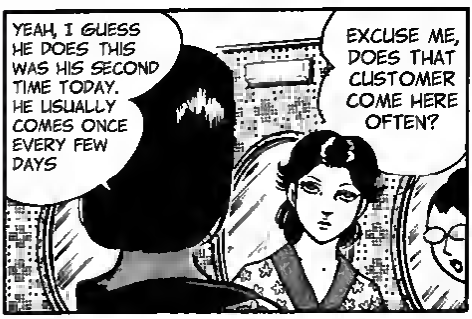

SFX: SLIP...
……
スルルル…
IT'S NOT HIM...

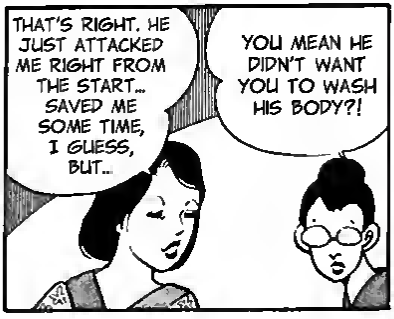


WELCOME.


NO... THERE'S ONLY ONE...
AHH!
WELCOME.
WHAT? WAS HE REALLY PUSHY OR SOME-THING?
THAT LAST CUSTOMER WAS SUCH A PAIN IN THE ASS!
AND NO MATTER WHAT I SAID TO HIM, HE WOULDN'T SAY ANY-THING BACK!
OH, I'D BE FINE IF HE WAS JUST PUSHY. NO, THIS GUY WAS CREEPY... AND I CAN'T STAND CREEPY!
SFX: HOO!


AN UNDER-SHIRT AND SUNGLAS-SES?!
WOW, THAT'S STRANGE
AND HE LEFT HIS SUNGLASSES ON... IT WAS REALLY EERIE...
HE WAS REALLY WEIRD... HE WOULDN'T TAKE OFF HIS UNDERSHIRT EITHER!

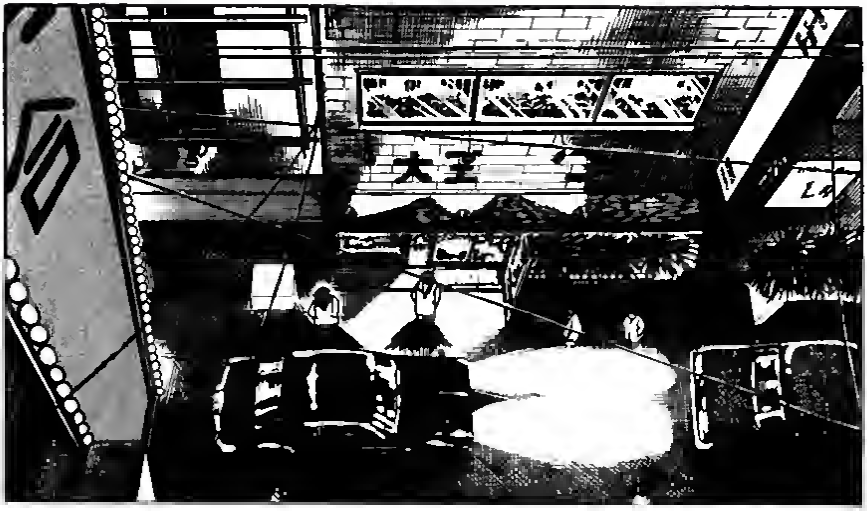

YEAH, I GUESS HE DOES THIS WAS HIS SECOND TIME TODAY. HE USUALLY COMES ONCE EVERY FEW DAYS
EXCUSE ME, DOES THAT CUSTOMER COME HERE OFTEN?

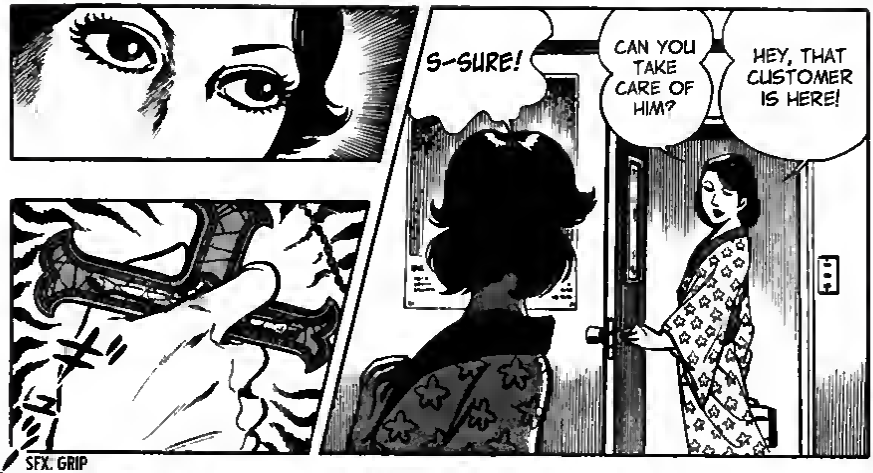

THAT'S RIGHT. HE JUST ATTACKED ME RIGHT FROM THE START... SAVED ME SOME TIME, I GUESS, BUT..
YOU MEAN HE DIDN'T WANT YOU TO WASH HIS BODY?!

THANK YOU...
SURE, MY PLEASURE! SO, YOU LIKE THOSE WEIRD GUYS, HUH?

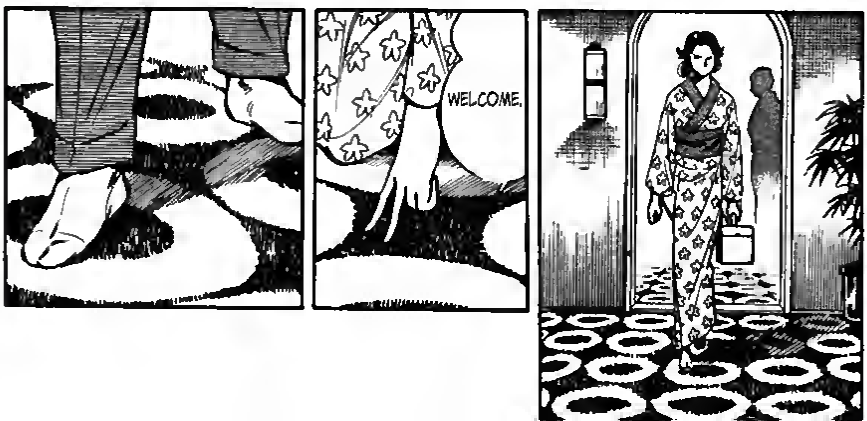
SORRY, BUT NEXT TIME HE COMES, COULD YOU PASS HIM OVER TO ME?

HOTEL
HE MUST BE HIDING SOMETHING
HE DOESN'T TAKE OFF HIS SUN GLASSES OR HIS SHIRT...

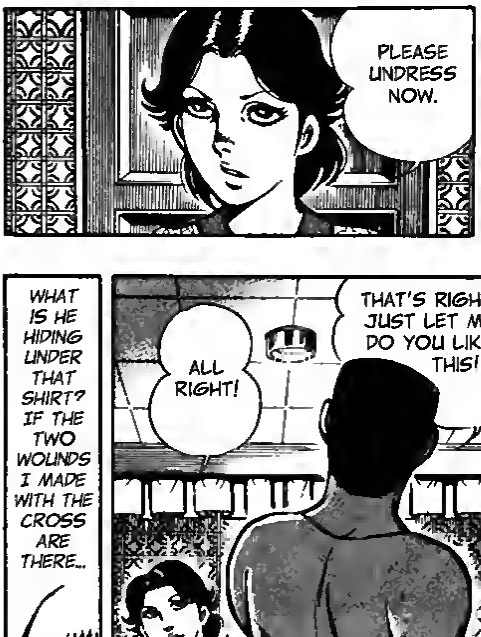



S-SURE!
CAN YOU TAKE CARE OF HIM?
HEY, THAT CUSTOMER IS HERE!

SFX: GRIP


WELCOME.

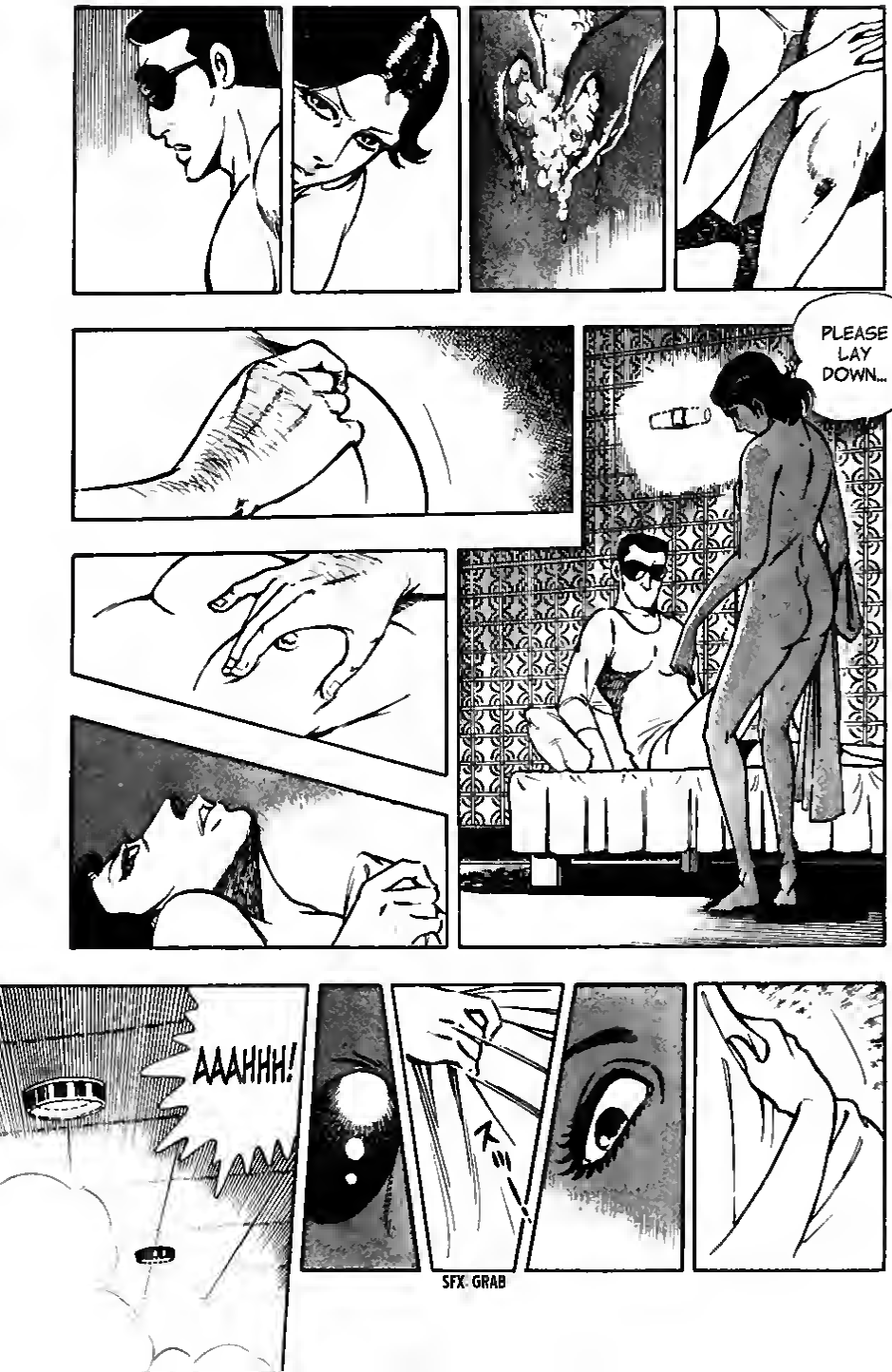
HE RESEMBLES HIM! HIS BODY, AND HIS FACIAL STRUCTURE...


PLEASE UNDRESS NOW.

WHAT IS HE HIDING UNDER THAT SHIRT? IF THE TWO WOUNDS I MADE WITH THE CROSS ARE THERE...
THEN HE'S THE MAN WHO KILLED MY BROTHER!

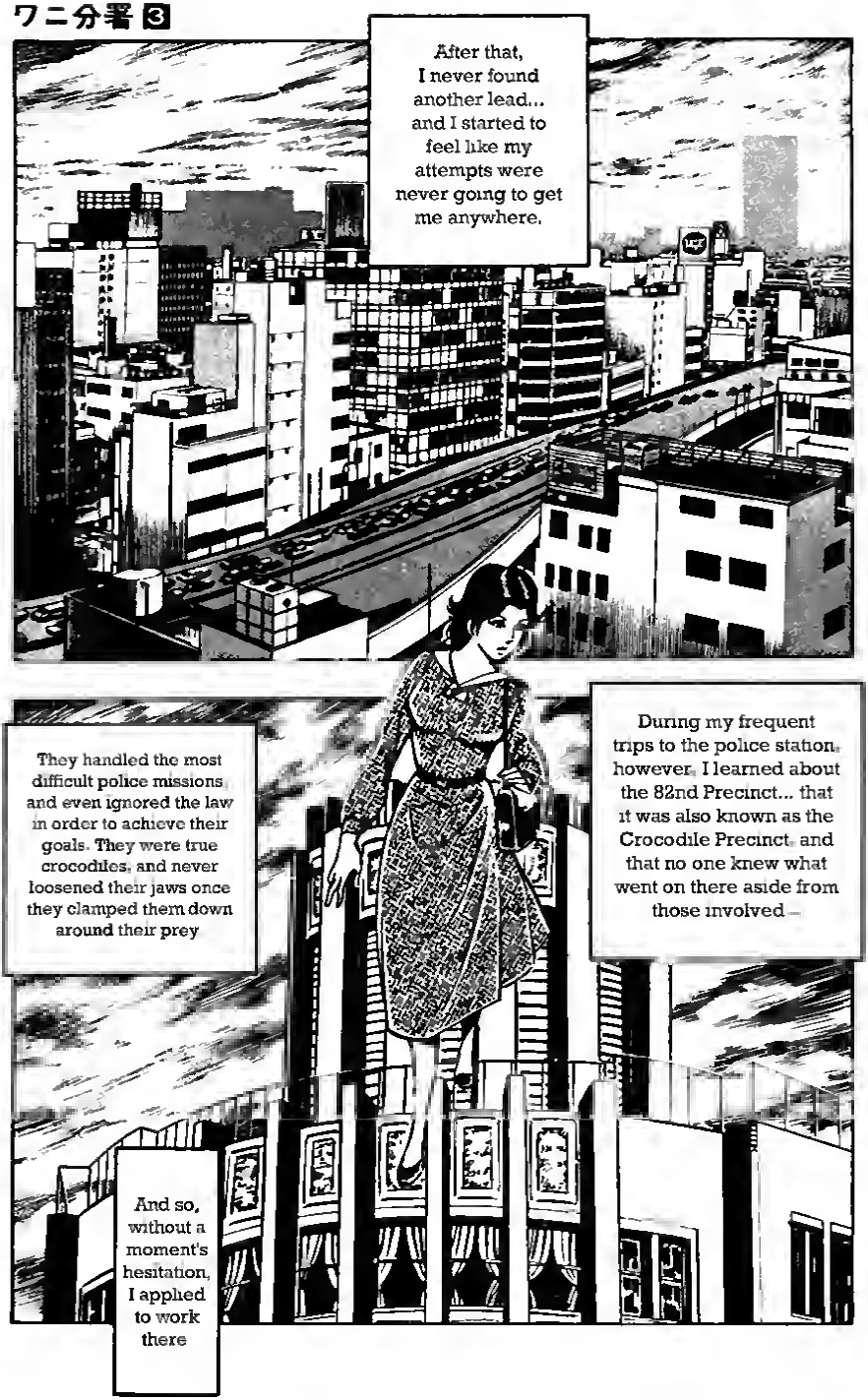
ALL RIGHT!
THAT'S RIGHT! JUST LET ME DO YOU LIKE THIS!

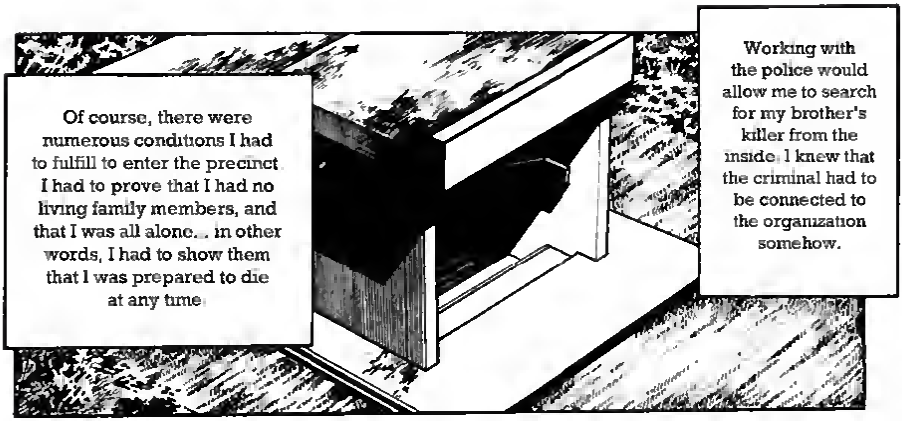
I DON'T NEED YOU TO WASH MY BODY...
WHAT?
YOU'RE GOING TO KEEP YOUR SHIRT ON?


PLEASE LAY DOWN...
AAAHHH!
SFX: GRAB

SFX WHAM
YANK
WH-WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!
IT'S NOT HIM!!
HUH? A TATTOO ?!
SFX FWAP

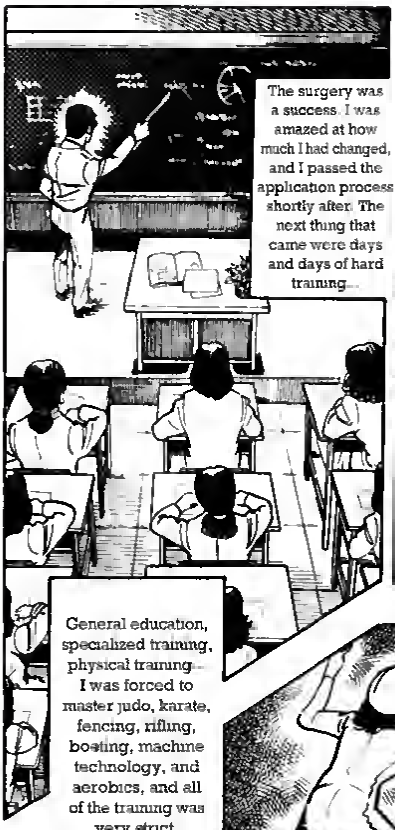
DAMMIT! I CAN'T BELIEVE THEY ACTUALLY SENT SOMEONE INTO A PLACE LIKE THIS!
!?
YOU'RE A SPY, AREN'T YOU?!
WHERE THE HELL HAVE THEY BEEN HIDING?!
IT WASN'T HIM... IT WAS JUST SOME YAKUZA ON THE RUN...
SFX DASH
I'M NOT GONNA LET YOU GET ME!

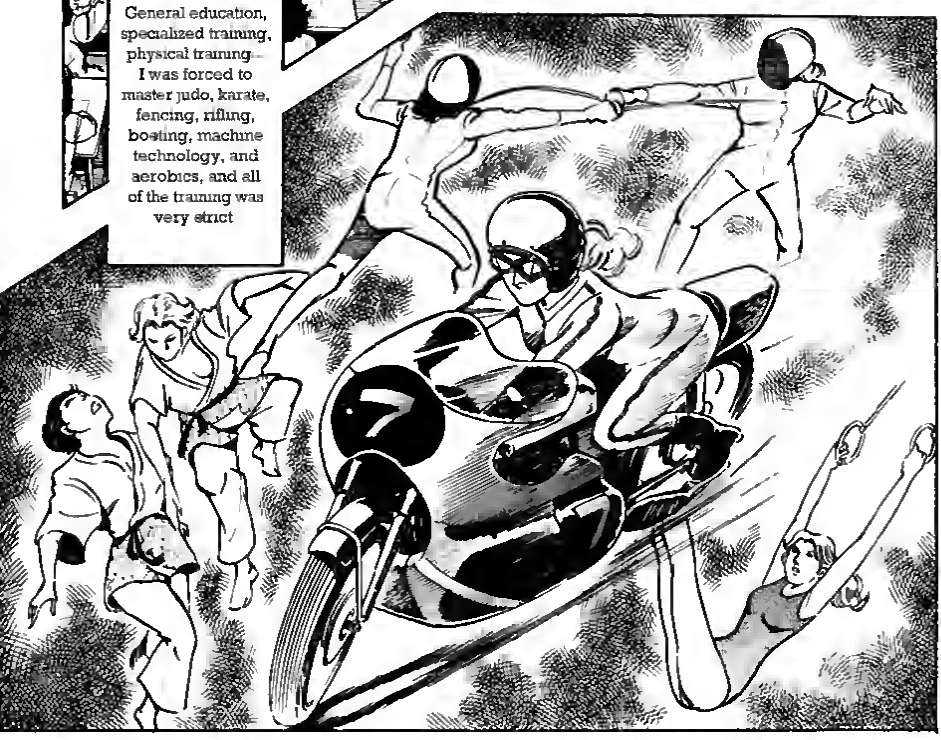

After that, I never found another lead... and I started to feel like my attempts were never going to get me anywhere.
They handled the most difficult police missions, and even ignored the law in order to achieve their goals. They were true crocodiles, and never loosened their jaws once they clamped them down around their prey.
During my frequent trips to the police station, however, I learned about the 82nd Precinct... that it was also known as the Crocodile Precinct, and that no one knew what went on there aside from those involved –
And so, without a moment's hesitation, I applied to work there


Of course, there were numerous conditions I had to fulfill to enter the precinct I had to prove that I had no living family members, and that I was all alone... in other words, I had to show them that I was prepared to die at any time.
Working with the police would allow me to search for my brother's killer from the inside. I knew that the criminal had to be connected to the organization somehow.

Before applying, I needed to completely "change" myself .. after all, since the killer most likely remembered and was afraid of my face, then I would never be able to move around freely unless I donned a completely new one...

And so, I made a visit to a plastic surgeon...

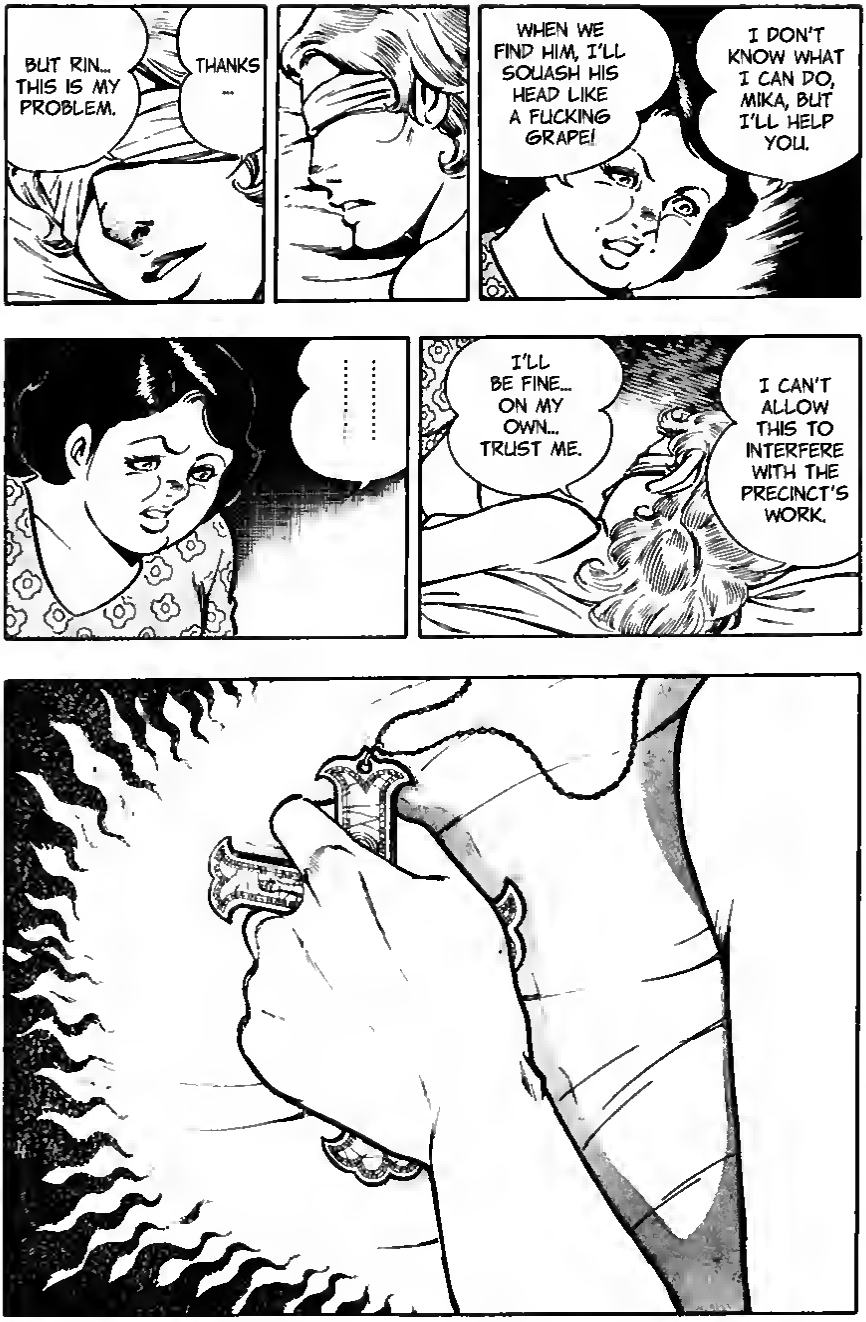

The surgery was a success. I was amazed at how much I had changed, and I passed the application process shortly after. The next thing that came were days and days of hard training...
General education, specialized training, physical training... I was forced to master judo, karate, fencing, rifling, boating, machine technology, and aerobics, and all of the training was very strict



It went on and on Swimming, skydiving, skiing, archery, yachting... I knew how to drive a car already, but I also learned how to drive motorcycles and Cessnas...

Lots of other applicants fell out along the way... of course, by that point, failure meant death.
After all the training was finished, only a few people remained. And out of them, I was the only one who was assigned to the 82nd Precinct
I still had absolutely no leads, though I was completely lost... and I still am.
And through all this, my hatred toward the criminal only grew and grew, while I continued my own private investigations..

AND THAT WILL NEVER CHANGE. THE BURNING HATRED THAT GROWS IN MY HEART EVERY DAY IS THE ONLY PROOF OF MY EXISTENCE.
MY ONLY REASON FOR LIVING HAS ONLY BEEN TO FIND THAT MAN AND EXACT REVENGE.
I NEVER WOULD HAVE THOUGHT THAT CROSS WAS BEARING SO MUCH.
MIKA... YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH SO MUCH PAIN...


BUT RIN... THIS IS MY PROBLEM.
THANKS ...
WHEN WE FIND HIM, I'LL SQUASH HIS HEAD LIKE A FUCKING GRAPE!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT I CAN DO, MIKA, BUT I'LL HELP YOU.
.....
I'LL BE FINE... ON MY OWN... TRUST ME.
I CAN'T ALLOW THIS TO INTERFERE WITH THE PRECINCT'S WORK.